# Stewardship *in the* Life of Youth

Robert Donald Williamson
Helen Kingsbury Wallace

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# STEWARDSHIP IN THE LIFE OF YOUTH

# Stewardship in the Life of Youth

By
ROBERT DONALD WILLIAMSON
and
HELEN KINGSBURY WALLACE
*Field Specialists, Stewardship Committee,*
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*Northern Baptist Convention*

Introduction by
HELEN B. MONTGOMERY

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*To*

DR. FREDERICK A. AGAR,

*whose unfailing devotion to his task has been our inspiration, we gratefully dedicate this book.*

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# Introduction

INTO the preparation of their new work, *Stewardship in the Life of Youth,* the authors have put, not only conviction, but experience. In their wide acquaintance with the churches of the entire country, as field specialists for the Stewardship Department of the Northern Baptist Convention, they have had first-hand contact with the actual effects of the practice of stewardship upon the life of the individual Christian.

It is not strange that they have become convinced and convincing believers in the practice, as well as the theory of stewardship. Their book will make practisers and promoters.

There is no question that the systematic teaching of the obligations of stewardship upon each disciple has been only occasional in the Protestant churches. The resulting weakness and sterility is plain to be seen. If the churches as a whole were half as well taught on stewardship as they are upon prohibition, there would be no disgraceful and enforced retrenchments forced upon our missionary societies.

Not more than one-fourth of the membership of the average church enters heartily and adequately into the financial support of the church's objectives. The rest are contented deadheads—riders on passes.

This state of things can and must be changed if there is to be a full functioning of the Christian life. The

present book is one of the factors in bringing about a change.

It is addressed to young people, and that it will be extremely helpful, I feel sure. People must be taught and trained young if they are to develop into good stewards; and because of the clear, forceful and winning manner of the presentation, this book cannot fail of going a long way in that direction.

I could wish that it might be used as a text-book in Summer Schools, Institutes, Assemblies, Sunday Schools, Church Schools of Missions and Young People's Societies.

HELEN B. MONTGOMERY.

*Rochester, N. Y.*

# Foreword

BECAUSE of the great need of a book on stewardship for young people, and because our experience has been largely confined to the sphere of youth, we have written this book. Our aim has been to make it really helpful to young people in the solution of their life problems, and in their Christian stewardship. We have tried to present our subject in a practical way, so that the reader may apply the principles of stewardship to his own actual living. To all those who have generously aided in the production of this book, we make grateful acknowledgment.

R. D. W.
H. K. W.

*New York, N. Y.*

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# I

# STEWARDSHIP IS PARTNERSHIP

*"Great crowds were going along with him, and he turned to them and said:*

*"'If any one comes to me and does not hate his father and his mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, and his own very life also, he cannot be a disciple of mine. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me, cannot be a disciple of mine.*

*"'Which of you who is desirous of building a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, to see if he has the means to complete it? Lest it happen that after he has laid the foundations and is unable to complete it, all who see it shall begin to jeer at him, saying, "This fellow began to build and could not finish."*

*"'Or what king as he goes forth to join battle with another king in war does not sit down first and deliberate whether he can meet with ten thousand men the one who is advancing against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, while the other king is yet a great way off, he sends an embassy to ask conditions of peace. Just so any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. . . .'"*—LUKE 14:25-33 (*Montgomery's Translation*).

# I

## STEWARDSHIP IS PARTNERSHIP

### *A Definition.*

A recent poster asks the arresting question: "What is 'Stewardship' but God's word for this generation?" Stewardship is not a new conception. It is a very ancient one. Man has long recognized his accountability to God for the use of the possessions with which He has endowed him. For centuries he has been thinking about stewardship, and, in consequence, the meaning of the word has grown broader and deeper and more significant year by year. Today, we have the ideal of Christian stewardship, and it is that ideal which seems to be, as the poster suggests, "God's word for this generation." It is peculiarly suited to the young people of today, for they think of religion in terms of *experience,* and stewardship is *religion in practice.* It is religion expressed in life, and for that reason young people respond to its challenge with enthusiasm.

### *Stewardship is Partnership.*

When one seeks to practice stewardship, he finds that it is partnership—partnership with Christ. He takes Christ not only as Saviour, but also as Lord. In recognizing Christ's lordship, he recognizes his own stewardship and is at once faced with the challenge of

full surrender of himself and his possessions for use in the Master's service. Nothing may be withheld. On the other hand, the Christian finds available, through his relationship to Christ, all the resources of God. Forgiveness, strength, guidance, and fellowship are his for the asking. It is a mutual rendering of resources, a sharing of purposes, a union of effort to realize those purposes. What are these but the conditions of partnership?

### *Christ's Friends.*

There are those who feel that the term "partnership" implies a greater intimacy than one should be privileged to enjoy with Christ. But let us recall the words that Jesus used as He talked with the men who walked with Him along the dusty roads of Galilee. They had called Him Master and Lord, but, somehow, Jesus felt that no longer did those words fully express the relationship between Him and them. Thoughtfully He told them that no longer should they be called servants but *friends.* In that way Jesus opened the door to partnership, for friendship is one of the loftiest types of partnership. True friends are partners. They give and receive; they share. Jesus imparted His divine life to His disciples, and, in turn, drew comfort and strength from the little group of men who were His followers. They were His partners in the greatest undertaking the world has ever seen.

### *Resources Pooled.*

Partnership with Christ is a *mutual* relationship. That is something that the young steward must never

forget. In true partnership, the partners pool their resources. One does not contribute everything, the other nothing; but both give their resources of personality, energy, time, money, influence, and effort. Life, itself, is put into the undertaking. It is to such a partnership that Jesus challenges youth today. He offers all and demands all. Among the graves of great men in Westminster Abbey there is one before which all Christians stand in reverence. Upon the stone are engraved these simple words of the Master: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring." It is the grave of one of Christ's true partners. David Livingstone put all that he had into the partnership. After his death two Africans whom he had led to Christ, tenderly took his heart and buried it under a mvula tree because, they said, "His heart will always beat for Africa." Then, for twenty-five days, they risked their lives to carry the body of Livingstone through the jungle to the coast in order that a British man-of-war might bear it to England. Livingstone gave his all in order to help his Partner in bringing the "other sheep." And Christ, in turn, poured into his life such riches as most of us know little about.

### *Christ Gives All.*

We must remember that the resources of Christ—which is to say the resources of God—are at our disposal. We sometimes forget this and fail to appropriate them, like the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son, who forgot that the riches of his father were his. His sinful but repentant young

brother was welcomed by the father with a feast, a ring, and much merrymaking. This angered the older son. He protested that he had stayed at home all these years but had never received a fatted calf, a ring, nor a feast. Quietly came the reply of the old father: "Son, all that I have is thine."

### *Christ the Partner.*

The father's resources were always at the disposal of the son. Similarly, into the Christian partnership have been poured all the resources of God. No young man or woman need face life alone and unaided. By his or her side is Christ, the great invisible Partner and Friend, bringing to the partnership a wealth of resources. What are some of them? What does Christ offer the young people of today?

### *Christ's Example.*

To answer the latter question fully in one small book would be impossible. Only a few of the Master's contributions to the partnership may be suggested. For one thing, He offers young people His example. We sometimes forget the youth of Jesus. We think of Him as a mature man, failing to remember His vigorous young manhood. We forget that the example which He set was that of a *young* man, tempted as young people are tempted today, yet without sin. It is a noble picture, that of Jesus, the young man, facing the problems of young manhood. A world, with the allurement that it holds for modern young people, was

before Him. There were temptations—to stoop to the lower things of self, to seize for Himself power that could be selfishly used. Jesus, the young man, faced these things, as we face them. But the nobility of His character asserted itself. He knew that the Father's plan for Him could never be carried out unless He chose to give Himself completely to His fellowmen. So, conquering the physical, defeating pride, slaying desire for selfish power, He came from the solitude of temptation, a living, mighty example of a young man victorious over sin. The resource of His example in temptation He offers young manhood and young womanhood today.

*Unselfish Service.*

Jesus estimated service as one of the highest ideals of life and made it the Kingdom test of true greatness —"Whosoever will be great among you shall be servant of all." He sets us an example of service also. It is to be noticed that in Jesus' service, there was no thought of reward. He found His reward in the joy He brought into the lives of others. It is a difficult lesson for us to learn. It is easy, in the mercenary spirit of the age in which we live, to look for recompense for service. But that is contrary to the example of Jesus. He served the poor maniac, the distressed blind man, the outcast leper, quite as readily as the man of social standing, of political influence, or of wealth. His motive of service was always the love which He had for His needy fellow men, and for His Father in Heaven. To us He gives His example and these

words: "For inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

*Christ the Citizen.*

In addition to His example in temptation and His example of service, Christ sets for us the example of good citizenship. His words, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's" reveal to us His recognition of authority of the government under which He lived. He never hesitated to protest against any misuse of power. He was willing at any time to cut through an established custom. He was ready to exert His mightiest influence against the wrongs of government. But He was ever the loyal citizen. What an example for us today! If He were here in person He would surely lift His voice against existing evils, but He would give His loyalty to the laws of the land and the authority of the state.

*Christ Recognizes Authority.*

He realized that while a man's convictions may not permit him to agree with all the laws of the land, yet the best way to right existing wrongs is not by force and anarchy, but by a life of staunch citizenship. Disrespect and disregard for law and the authority of law have always led to chaos. The evils of taxation in the World Empire of Rome certainly could not have had the sanction of Jesus; He was ever the champion of the oppressed. But, nevertheless, He thought it well that poor laboring men make their payment

of tribute money. In so doing He evidenced His regard for law.

*Authority of Law.*

Ignorance, finding ready channels in misguided men, has frequently used force in an attempt to disregard the authority of the state. The country was shocked a few years ago when word flashed from coast to coast, that men participating in an Armistice Day parade, had been killed by I. W. W.'s lying in ambush. The murder was a direct challenge to the authority of the state. No good comes, or ever can come, from such rash and short-sighted action. Such folly would undoubtedly have received the most unqualified condemnation of Jesus. Certain laws have been found unpopular by some classes of people and a hilarious disregard for law has resulted. Men boast with pride of evading its mandates. The idea of obeying only those laws which are pleasing, has found favor with many people; but against such an evil within the state, Jesus took His stand. It is easy to imagine how His wrath and scathing denunciation would be hurled against such traitorous selfishness.

*Fellowship with Jesus.*

Another great resource which Christ brings to the partnership is His fellowship. Fellowship with Jesus! What a joy and what a responsibility! It offers us forgiveness, cleansing, strength, peace, guidance, and comfort, and it also brings responsibility, for it is not for personal enjoyment only, but enriches the stew-

ard's life in order that he may have more to give to others.

*Fellowship and Forgiveness.*

When He walked among men, Jesus' fellowship meant much to His followers. To Peter it meant forgiveness. In sympathy we can feel the deep repentant agony of his heart when his denial broke the sweet fellowship which he had enjoyed with the Master, and he went out and wept bitterly. We can also enter into his joy when, in that sacred unrecorded interview, the Lord "appeared first unto Simon" and the broken fellowship was mended. Christ's fellowship holds forgiveness—there is comfort in the thought. That it also holds responsibility was part of the lesson which Peter learned. In the dim light of early morning, after the breakfast on the shore which the loving hands of the resurrected Lord had prepared for the weary fishermen, Jesus took Peter aside for a little walk and talk with him. Directly, but tenderly, He reminded Peter of his sin. Then, with great emphasis, He laid upon him the responsibility which was the accompaniment of the restored fellowship: "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep."

*Fellowship and Strength.*

To Paul, fellowship meant strength. He found in his life two laws operating. One was his desire to do right; the other, the temptation to do "that which he would not." In deep distress he sought a solution, and from his triumphant, "I can do all things through

Christ which strengtheneth me," we know that he found it in fellowship with Jesus.

***Fellowship and Peace.***

To all of the disciples, in an hour when confusion and fear had come upon them, when evil threatened them, and the One whom they loved, when dark hours were just ahead, fellowship with Jesus brought peace. His calm voice quieted their disturbed minds: "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." That legacy of peace is for us, his twentieth century disciples, as well. In dark hours, we too, may hear Him say, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

***Fellowship and Comfort.***

To Martha and Mary, two young women who had met one of life's great sorrows, fellowship with Jesus meant comfort. Lonely folk today find solace in His fellowship. It is the fellowship of a Friend who cares, who understands, and who desires to help. It is the fellowship of sympathy and of love. What a partnership is ours when it brings to us the fellowship of Jesus!

***Jesus Brings Hope.***

Still another resource which Jesus offers is hope, a hope both temporal and eternal. It was a temporal and an eternal hope for the blind man, the leper, the centurion, the paralytic, and all who came to be par-

takers of His abundant life. His hope has always meant a new day for men tempted and defeated. Discouraged souls have ever found a new impetus in the hope which Jesus gives. It is a hope that brings with it life abundant and life everlasting, and it is only one of many rich resources which our Lord brings to the Christian partnership.

***Partnership Not One-sided.***

But partnership, as we have said, is *mutual.* It is not one-sided. Not only Christ's resources, but *ours,* must be given. Christ calls young men and women to pour out their all in the service of God. It is easy to forget the tremendous responsibility of partnership. Because we fail to catch the vision of our great Partner; because of laziness, or cowardice, or selfishness; we do not do our share. We appropriate without question all that Christ offers us, but fail to meet our reciprocal obligations. We give grudgingly and meagerly of ourselves and of our money for the promotion of His work. It is a one-sided partnership, an unfaithful stewardship. We have too long regarded stewardship as optional. Too long have we permitted Christians, unchallenged, to withhold from Christ anything which they felt it inconvenient to place at His disposal. Too many stewards have given material possessions to the partnership, but have withheld time, energy, and talents. Too many more have given of service to ease their consciences from the guilt of withholding their money. *All* of the steward's possessions belong to the partnership. The resources

of God are given to us without reservation. The rendering of our resources is not optional. All that we are and have belongs to Him.

***Partnership Inclusive.***

Not only must partnership be mutual. It must also be wholly *inclusive,* permeating and glorifying all of life. The Partner has an interest in our recreation, our daily work, our social and business relationships, as well as in our worship and Christian service. We must not exclude Him from any interest. As has often been said, religion is not for Sunday only. It is real and effective only when it touches every interest of life with its transforming power. In solving problems of personal conduct, in forming our opinions and moulding our convictions, we should seek to find our Partner's will and to do it; to discover our Partner's attitude and to follow it. Again and again we must ask the question, "What would Jesus do? What would His attitude be?" The partnership should color every thought and act. We must, in so far as is possible, be in perfect harmony with Him.

***Cost of Stewardship.***

Stewardship presents a real challenge to youth because to fulfil the obligations of partnership with Christ, and to realize its possibilities, are not easy. No challenge has ever called for sterner heroism than this. Because of the courage demanded, thoughtful young men and women often pause before agreeing to

enter into the relationship of partner and friend with Jesus Christ in the great task to which He gave, and is giving Himself, of winning the hearts of men to His principles, His hope, and His salvation. It is a joyous relationship, but a costly one. Christ represented it as such. He warned the multitude to count the cost before following Him. He invited men to deny themselves, to take up the cross, to lose their lives in order to find them. And, today, the young steward, if he is faithful, will find the Christian partnership both difficult and costly. He must give largely of strength, time and money. He discovers that the relationship sometimes brings criticism, if not persecution, upon him. When he seeks to follow his Master's way of life, when he applies to modern problems —religious, social, political, and economic—the test of Jesus' attitude, when he tries to convert his Partner's teaching into actual living, he often finds himself unpopular and the object of scorn or ridicule. Because of these facts, many are content to be Christians in name only. Dean Inge of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, says:

"We are losing our Christianity mainly because Christianity is a creed for heroes, and we are harmless, good-natured little people who want everybody to have a good time."

### *Christianity's Challenge.*

Real Christianity is a challenge to do the difficult thing, to live the hard life, to surmount tremendous difficulties. But youth has ever risen to a challenge!

***Love the Motive.***

There is one difference between the relationship which unites Christ and His steward, and that which exists between partners in business. The Christian partnership is based upon love. Jesus Christ so loved that He gave Himself, and His steward responds with a love which springs from gratitude. A partnership motivated by love is a joyful relationship. The steward delights to pour out personality and possessions in service. He gives all that he is and all that he has to the partnership because he loves his Partner. Christian stewardship which springs from a sense of duty only, is not ideal. The steward must give thought to the *motive* of his stewardship. If the partnership is receiving less than his best, the explanation may be found there. Either he has a motive other than love, or, if he has the right motive, he has too little of it. Partnership with Christ rises to its best only when service is the generous, spontaneous expression of a deep and grateful love. "The love of Christ constraineth us."

***Spiritual Growth.***

When the right conditions exist, stewardship results in constant spiritual growth. In the recognition of dependence upon his Partner, in the realization that he has a share and a responsibility in carrying out God's plan, in the giving of self and substance to a great task, the young steward finds conditions which promote spiritual development. All of life takes on new dignity and significance when it is recognized as

a trust from God to be administered as a partnership with Christ.

***Privilege—Inspiration—Responsibility.***

Christian stewardship is partnership! We are laborers together with God! What a privilege, what an inspiration, what a responsibility!

Questions for Further Thought and Discussion

1. What are the other examples set for us by Christ that are not mentioned in the chapter?
2. What are some other privileges of fellowship not mentioned in this chapter?
3. Is the Christian partnership for profit or for service?
4. Is there profit in Christian service? If so, of what sort?
5. Draw up a contract of partnership with Christ, indicating the terms of the contract, the conditions, the purpose of it, the mutual responsibilities involved, the rewards promised. After you have done this with great care, sign and lay it before the great Partner for His approval.
6. Having done the above, review the situation in which you find yourself from time to time and state very definitely:
    a. the problems that have arisen;
    b. the blessings or satisfaction experienced from the partnership;
    c. the adjustments in your way of living which you have found it necessary to make.

# II

# THE RESOURCES OF YOUTH

*"But look! a certain man came up to him and asked,*

*"'Teacher, what good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life.'*

*"'Why do you ask me about what is good?' asked Jesus. 'There is but One who is good. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.'*

*"'Which commandments?' asked the man.*

*"Jesus replied:*

*"'Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not bear false witness; Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'*

*"The young man answered:*

*"'I have carefully kept them all. What yet do I lack?'*

*"'If you want to be perfect,' said Jesus, 'Go sell your property, give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.'*

*"But when the young man heard this teaching, he went away sorrowfully, for he was one who had much property."*—MATTHEW 19:16-22 (*Montgomery's Translation*).

## II

## THE RESOURCES OF YOUTH

***God or Mammon.***

In the days of His earthly ministry, Christ called a young man to partnership with Him. He expected faithful stewardship—that the young man's "great possessions" would be placed at His disposal. But the rich young ruler loved things more than he loved Jesus. He hardened his heart against the gentle appeal, "Follow me," and, dimly realizing his mistaken choice, went away sorrowful.

***Surrender of Self.***

Christ still calls young men and women, rich in resources, to partnership. No one can make a greater mistake than to refuse that call. But to accept it is to face the responsibility of dedicating all that one is and has to the enterprise. The rich young man's attitude is too often reflected in the question asked by young people who are seriously considering becoming Christians—"What must I give up?" That question leads us to believe that the Christian Church has mis-stated the call of Jesus. His requirement is not the giving up of this interest or that. Rather, He calls to a courageous surrender of self with all that is involved.

*Surrender of Will.*

The first step is the surrender of the will. When the will is yielded, the complete surrender of the life follows naturally. It was the surrender of the will that the rich young ruler refused to make. He wanted to do as he chose with his riches. In contrast, the apostle Paul affords an illustration of a surrendered will followed by a surrendered life. His question was not, "What must I give up?" but, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" He gave his all, and at last, was able to cry victoriously, "I have fought a good fight." Our Lord, Himself, is another example. When as a young man, kneeling in the garden, He was able to say: "Thy will be done," the surrender was complete. It was immediately followed by the placing of His life at God's disposal. A yielded will must always precede an accepted cross.

*Complete Surrender.*

A consecrated man who is well known to modern Christians, tells of sitting in his study one day, thinking of his life in terms of its surrender to Jesus Christ. He seemed to feel the presence of the Master and to hear Him gently asking for the keys to the chambers of his heart. One after another he gladly yielded them. At last only one little key remained. He did not want to surrender it. "Master, I can't give up this one," he said. "Let me keep just this from you." The Lord sorrowfully turned away. He seemed to want all of the keys or none of them. But the man could not let Him go. Struggling to make the

complete surrender, he said: "Master, I haven't the strength to give it to you, but come and take it." Then the Lord turned back, and, taking the little key, unlocked the chamber that had been long closed. Entering in, He cleansed and possessed it. From that moment, the Christian knew the joy that can come only from a wholly surrendered will.

*Inventory of Life.*

To the surrender of the will, the yielding of the resources of the life is related as naturally as love and sacrifice. The young Christian whose will is fully surrendered naturally begins at once to consider how he can serve the One whose lordship he has owned. He wants to be a faithful steward, so he makes a careful analysis of his life and its resources. He searches himself to discover qualities that may be used by Christ in His great enterprise. He takes an inventory of his possessions, that he may know what he has to bring to the partnership.

*Courage.*

What have young men and women to offer Christ? What are some of the assets of youth? Courage is one of them. Youth is unafraid. Young Christians are often ready to attack a task before which older folk hesitate. The Church today needs the stimulus of the courage of youth.

*Enthusiasm.*

Another youthful quality is enthusiasm. Older men

and women are less exuberant, but they are heartened by the enthusiasm of youth. Wherever young and old are willing to coöperate in the service of Christ, both are helped by the union. If, in addition to their own meetings and good times, the young people of a church are ready to bring their youth and enthusiasm into its regular services and into its social life, a fine spirit is effected.

*Physical Strength.*

Youth has a large contribution to make to Christian work in its physical strength. Most young persons are strong. They have an abundance of life to bring to the service of the King. Youth may lay its strength at His feet, or it may waste it in selfishness or in sin. We "beseech you therefore . . . to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

*An Illustration.*

A young woman in a great city had a class in a church school. Its members were little girls from the slums. The teacher had a tremendous opportunity to give to those starved little lives some of her wealth of culture and Christian experience. But, one day, the superintendent of the school received her resignation. She hadn't the strength to keep up the class, she said. It was true that she could not continue all that she was doing. But it seemed unfortunate that the first thing to be given up was her great opportunity to serve her Master. There was strength enough for work and

recreation—for many lesser interests—but not strength enough for Him. Is your Partner receiving first place in your use of strength?

### *Mental Powers.*

Mental powers constitute another important asset. The mind of youth is immature, but it has a freshness of outlook, a receptivity to truth, and a straightforward clarity of its own. Are you putting your brains into your Christian service? How many offices in young people's societies and in churches would be better administered if the officers put half the thought into them that they give to their daily work! Christ needs our best for the furtherance of the greatest business in the world. Moreover, we are living in an age of tremendous problems both within and outside the Church. These problems—religious, social, economic and political—present a challenge to the keen, trained minds and the Christian stewardship of youth. Truly thoughtful young folk cannot live in such an age without seeking to find the answers to many perplexing questions. Their minds cannot be wholly occupied with pleasant nothings. Conditions challenge them to *think* and to help find the Christian solution for problems that are vexing the world.

### *Social Opportunities.*

Social opportunities are another part of youth's stewardship. Young people are continually mingling with others—in school or college, at work, in recreation, and at church. These human contacts may be

used for Jesus Christ, to win others for Him and to His service. His prayer, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world," has been answered.

***God Among Men.***

An old legend tells of a monk who wanted to get close to God and so climbed up into the cathedral spire. For days he waited there, listening for God's voice. Then, one day, he heard it—but it sounded very faint and far away. "Where art thou, Lord?" he cried. The answer came up from the pavement below, "Down here among the people." That is where God is working and where He wants us to work. Day after day, we touch other lives. Are we using the contacts to His advantage? Do we, at every opportunity, say a word for Him?

***Influence.***

It is not only by our lips that we can exalt the Christ, although we should do that. A Christ-like life and a Christ-like spirit radiate an influence which sometimes counts even more. The stewardship of influence is one of the greatest responsibilities of a Christian, because, by his influence, he is either drawing men toward Christ or repelling them from Him. As they observe him they are saying, either: "I wish that I could be like that," or "If that is what it is to be a Christian, I don't want to be one." As Paul puts it, Christians are "epistles, known and read of all men."

*"We are the only Bible the careless world will read,*
*We are the sinner's gospel, we are the scoffer's creed,*
*We are the Lord's last message, given in deed or word,*
*What if the type is crooked? What if the print is blurred?"*

Men and women, boys and girls, all around us are forming their opinions of Christianity from observing us who are called Christians. Is your influence an asset or a liability to your Partner?

***Power of Influence.***

A young American teacher in a Japanese government school gave his word that he would not mention Christ or Christianity to his students. He kept his promise, but his life was so pure, his spirit so kind, that his students began to seek for his secret of living. After some months, a large group of the boys whom he taught gave themselves to the Christ whom they knew he followed. Many of them later entered the Christian ministry. It was the silent but conquering power of influence.

***Influence Changes Things.***

A Christian's influence should have an effect upon those around him. Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world," "Ye are the salt of the earth." Light and salt change things. He wants us to have a transforming influence; an influence like that of a picture which hung in the room of a college student. The young

man was a freshman and had been at college only a few months. His mother planned to surprise him with a little visit. So without writing him that she was coming, she arrived one day upon the campus and inquired for her son. She was told that he was in class. Just then a friend of his, a young man from their town, came up and greeted her. After talking with him for a moment, she asked him to take her to her son's room in order that she might wait for him there. While she waited she looked about at the pictures on the walls. Many of them would not have been there if her son had known that she was coming. They were not pictures which he would have been proud for his mother to see. But she was a wise mother, and, when her son came in, she did not scold about the pictures, or even comment upon them. They had a delightful visit and then she went away. Within a few days, however, the young man received a large package from home. Upon opening it, he found that it contained a beautifully framed copy of Hoffman's *Head of Christ.* It was from his mother.

***Influence Transforms Life.***

Several months later she made him a second visit. Again she came unannounced, and went directly to his room. There were only two pictures on the walls this time, the *Head of Christ,* and a large panorama of the Canadian Rockies. Soon the young man came in, and, after they had talked a while, his mother said quietly: "I see that you have some new pictures." He hung his head a bit shamefacedly, and turned a little

red. Then, meeting her eyes, he said: "Yes, mother, the others I had wouldn't go with Him," nodding at the Hoffman's "Christ." The picture in its purity and beauty had changed things around it. It had driven the other pictures from the walls. Have you a transforming influence? Are there things that "will not go" with you, because you are so like Him?

***Personality.***

Some young persons are blessed with unusual "personality," and, just as it is a valuable asset in business and social relationships, so it is a resource of great value to the Christian enterprise. Someone has said, "Success is personality." If that be true, and if you have personality, why not use it for Jesus Christ to make *His* work successful? If you can be winsome and charming for your own advantage, why not use the same power to win others to Christ and to His service?

***Talent and Ability.***

Not all of us have that elusive and indefinable something that we call personality, but most of us have a talent. Perhaps it is an ability to sing, or to speak, or to play some instrument. Perhaps it is the power to do some skillful work with the hands. Perhaps it is a quality of leadership, or executive ability, or success in teaching little children. What it is does not matter so much as the use that we make of it. Every talent should be given unreservedly to Jesus Christ that He may use it whenever and wherever He will. It re-

quires conscious stewardship to place a talent at Christ's disposal.

*Consecration of Talent.*

A young woman had an unusual talent for playing the violin. She was in great demand to play at dances. Although she was not a Christian, she was a girl of high ideals, and she did not enjoy being present at some of the dances, but, on the contrary, felt uncomfortable and unhappy. Her mother and two younger sisters, however, were dependent upon her for support; so she doggedly kept on. A series of evangelistic meetings was in progress at the church which she sometimes attended. One evening she had no engagement to play, so she went to church. On that night she heard her Saviour calling her to partnership with Him, and, courageously answering His call, she became a Christian. The next evening she came again to the church. At the close of the service, when the invitation to follow Christ was given, she rose and walked down the aisle, bearing her violin. Quietly she brought it to the altar and laid it there. It was a silent witness to the fact that not only her life was consecrated to Jesus Christ, but her talent also was dedicated to His service. It was the stewardship of talent. The instrument was never used again except in a way that He could bless.

*Time.*

Time is a stewardship in which all of us share equally—we each have twenty-four hours a day. As Arnold Bennett has pointed out, a millionaire may

have more money than you, but, in a sense, he has no more time—he, too, has only twenty-four hours. Christians are responsible for the spending of this wealth. They may spend it foolishly, or selfishly, or for God. Many persons who find it comparatively easy to surrender their material resources to God, give little thought to their use of time.

***Stewardship of Time.***

Yet the Church of today has some busy men and women who count that day lost which does not see some definite time set apart for Christian work. A few years ago, a wealthy woman presented herself at an office from which missionary literature was sent, and offered her services. She was not satisfied with the generous giving of money. She wanted to give time also. When she was told that no help was needed except for someone to wrap bundles of literature for mailing, she promptly offered to do that. Day after day, this rich woman came to give hours to wrapping and tying packages. It was a humble, tedious service, but a needed one, and it required a faithful stewardship of time.

***God and Business.***

A visitor to the office of one of New York's busiest attorneys, having been admitted by one secretary after another, finally came upon the man whom he sought. He found the great lawyer, in the midst of a day of tremendous pressure, engrossed in the King's business. He had laid aside important legal matters, and was

deliberately taking time for the service of the Master. In order that such cases as these may be the rule instead of the exception, the youth of today must give itself to a careful and regular stewardship of time.

***Money.***

Young people have some money of their own. Some have an allowance; some earn money. A portion of every dollar of the young steward, as well as a portion of every day, belongs to his Partner. If all Christian young people would form the habit of regular, proportionate giving, the work of the Church of tomorrow would not be hindered as is that of the Church of today. Paul recommends: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by as God hath prospered him." That is weekly giving according to one's ability to give. It is a high privilege to be permitted a share in the greatest enterprise in the world! "We are laborers together with God," and can give our money for the support of schools, hospitals, and churches, and to send the story of a Saviour to the ends of the earth.

***Prayer.***

Prayer is another great asset. Young people are asking many questions about prayer. A pastor in the middle west says that in a series of meetings which he recently held in a college town, he gave an opportunity to the students to ask questions. Sixty per cent of the questions asked were concerning prayer. Young people are thinking about prayer. Do they realize what a

tremendous force it is, and that they are stewards of it, to neglect or use it as they will. Prayer is a power. "Prayer changes things." Are we using it for others, for needy lives around us, for dark lives across the sea? We are stewards of the power of prayer.

***The Gospel.***

Our greatest stewardship, the greatest trust which God has put into our hands, is the Gospel message. It is a story that brings transformed lives. What would your life have been if you had never heard it? Christ is depending upon us who are His twentieth century disciples to spread the story in order that other lives may be transformed.

*"Christ has no hands but our hands to do His work today,*
*He has no feet but our feet to lead men in His way,*
*He has no tongue but our tongues to tell men how He died,*
*Christ has no help but our help, to bring men to His side."*

He wants us to tell the story, by our lives and with our lips, wherever there is need of it. He wants us to tell it in our homes, at school, in the places where we work. He wants us to tell it in person, or by our gifts and prayers, in India and Africa and Japan. We are stewards of the message that, wherever sincerely accepted, brings light into darkness. We are His only plan, His only agents, for the spread of that story throughout the world. Shall we fail Him?

### *Youth's Resources Surrendered.*

These are only a few of the assets of youth. Young men and women are rich in resources which the Master wants for His work in the world. Are we ready to apply to all of life Paul's words: "I have a stewardship entrusted to me"? With the passing of a few years, the youth of today will be the Church of tomorrow. In order that it may be a consecrated Church, made up of faithful stewards, youth must give itself *now* to the practice of stewardship.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Make a list of the resources of your life that Christ could use; then with sincerity offer them to Him.
2. What resources have young people that the chapter does not bring out?
3. Have you reached the point in your love for the Master where you are able to surrender your entire life to Him?
4. Is there some particular thing to which you are clinging, unwilling to consecrate it to Christ? If so, upon what ground do you justify your position?
5. So far as our influence is concerned, to what extent are we our brother's keeper?

# III

# STEWARDSHIP DEMANDS DEVELOPMENT

*"For it is like a man going into another country who summoned his slaves, and committed his property to their care. To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another, one—to each according to his individual ability—and then set out on his travels. At once the man who had received the five talents went out and traded with them, and made five talents more. In the same way the one who got two talents made another two. But he who had received the one talent went off, and dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money.*

*"After a long time the master of those slaves came, and demanded a reckoning with them. The man who had received the five talents came, bringing five more. . . .*

*"'Well done, good and faithful slave,' replied his master; 'you have been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. Enter into your master's joy.'*

*"The second, who had received the two talents, came up and said:*

*"'Master, it was two talents that you entrusted to me; see, I have gained two more.'*

*"'Well done, good and faithful slave,' his master replied, 'you have been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things; enter into your master's joy.'*

*"Then the man who had received the one talent came up and said:*

*"'Master, . . . I was afraid; I went away and buried your talent in the earth.'*

*"'You wicked and lazy slave,' said his master. . . . 'You ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back my property with interest. So take away the talent from him, and give it to the man who has ten talents. (For to every one who has, it shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him who has not shall be taken away even what he has.) . . .*"—MATTHEW 25:14-30 (*Montgomery's Translation*).

## III

## STEWARDSHIP DEMANDS DEVELOPMENT

### *Potential Resources.*

Some day, when we stand in the presence of the great Partner and hear Him say: "Render an account of thy stewardship," we shall realize that we have not only actual resources for which to give an account, but potential ones as well. That is to say, He will hold us responsible for developing into that of which we are capable, for being that which we have it in us to become. As faithful stewards we must make actual the potential. We must not be content to remain as we are, but must ever seek to realize the possibilities of our beings. Dean Inge has said: "Ideals are ideas in the process of realization." We must translate our ideals into facts! We must make our dreams into realities! We must seek to become what we wish we were! It is a slow process, a quiet, steady building, day after day. But it is required of faithful stewards.

### *Survey of Self.*

The first step in self-development is to make a survey of oneself. One must face the facts before he can change them. He should take an inventory of his physical self first of all. He should ask himself: What are the weaknesses of my body? What will overcome

them? What habits have I that lower my efficiency? What are my physical needs in order that I may be of maximum service? Few persons, comparatively, attain the potential in health and strength. Demosthenes overcoming his defect in speech; Roosevelt, developing himself, by means of exercise, from a sickly child into an unusually strong and vigorous man, are exceptions, rather than the rule. We should resolve to be as well and strong as intelligent development will make us. We must understand ourselves, and by careful attention to diet, exercise, protection, and self-control, attain our physical best. In that way we can render our Partner physical strength and a long life of service.

***Care of Body.***

Our bodies have not a little to do with the state of our minds and spirits. It is remarkably true that a sane, serene mental life and a deep spirituality have their basis in a strong healthy body. Of course there are exceptions to this general truth, but the rule holds good, and is an argument in favor of the care of the body. Furthermore, the body is the means of expression of the mind and the spirit. Just as the skill of the surgeon is dependent upon a clean, keen, instrument, so the mind and the spirit must rely for expression upon the body. Great thoughts and deep religious experiences find their source in mind and heart, but, in order to be of use to others, they must find expression through brain, tongue, and hand. The body should be healthy in order that it may give clear expression to the mental and spiritual life, and strong, in order

that it may carry truth "into all the world." The Bible offers still another reason for taking care of the body: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God. . . .? Therefore glorify God in your body."

### *Mental Development.*

The next step in the survey is to take the measure of the mind and consider its possibilities. Mental powers are capable of great development. The human mind rarely reaches its limits of growth. Young people in America have today many opportunities for the development of disciplined, straight-thinking minds, minds capable of use in the solution of big problems. Excellent institutions of learning, free libraries, good books, magazines, newspapers, and informing lectures are abundant. Of course it is also true that there are plenty of worthless, and worse than worthless, influences, from which the growing mind of youth needs protection. For example, there are a number of very popular magazines on some news-stands that soil the mind rather than develop it. But one who really wants mental growth and exercise, has in this day a rich store of material upon which to draw. He needs only to discriminate.

### *Educated to Serve.*

Just as a Christian seeks physical strength in order that he may give his best service, so he seeks mental growth and discipline for the same reason. Education,

therefore, for the Christian, is preparation for service. Most young people need to catch that vision. There are too many purposeless students and students with trivial purposes. A college education is a glorious opportunity for growth, with a consequent responsibility to give. It is too often regarded as only a chance to have a good time, or to make a fraternity, or to prepare for money-making. The great privilege of education is accompanied by a responsibility to share the benefits with others. God wants us to be acqueducts, not sponges. "Freely ye have received, freely give." "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required."

### *Life Greatest School.*

Fortunately, in this country, higher education is within the reach of many young men and women who are willing to work for it. To those who, because of circumstances, cannot have the advantage of a college education, many opportunities for mental development remain. After all, life itself is the greatest school into which any of us will ever matriculate. We learn more there than in any university. A college education is valuable, but not indispensable, to a thoroughly developed mind. It might be added, in passing, that those who think it indispensable and who scorn everyone who is without a degree have a warped view of life. An intellectual snob is as bad as any other sort.

### *Cultivation of Friendships.*

Great friendships and contacts with stimulating per-

sonalities are an important factor in mental development. Most college graduates look back to college days with grateful memories of the men and women who as members of the faculty directed their thinking. To most of those who cannot go to college a similar opportunity is open. Meredith Nicholson, one of numerous examples of highly educated men and women " without benefit of college," writes: " To aspiring boys and girls who are denied what we call ' opportunities ' I would say: Cultivate the acquaintance of healthy-minded, high-minded people. Broadly speaking, it's just as easy to know interesting people as it is to know dull ones. There's hardly a community in the United States where there isn't some one of understanding mind and heart and the knowledge to help you in your pursuit of any branch of learning. Never fall into the error of thinking the world's against you, for it isn't! It's really ' strong for you,' and all its vast resources are at your command if you knock at the right doors." There are many ways in which to feed and exercise the mind so that it may attain the possibilities that God intended for it.

***Development of Talents.***

Self-development includes also the training of talents. Perhaps there is something that catches your interest, something that you believe you could learn to do well. It is a tendency, an ability, that has never been given an opportunity to become a talent. One occasionally hears the remark, prompted no doubt by modesty: " I don't believe that I have any talent."

Although the motive may be good, the statement is seldom true, and casts a bit of reflection upon a Creator who has endowed most of us with tendencies toward talent at least. It is not God's fault if we neglect to develop them into genuine talents. Buried, like the talent in the Master's parable, they are of no use to Him. Often we cannot afford to pay for the highest training of talent, but whatever we can afford, it is our duty as stewards to provide, in order that we may give our best to the partnership.

***Character Development.***

When we consider character development, we find that we have not only a limitless opportunity for growth, but also a perfect Pattern. Jesus Christ, the strong, sinless Son of God is before us, a perfect ideal, ever inspiring us to follow. We see His fearlessness, His humility, His tolerance, His compassion, His complete dedication to service—all His matchless loveliness —and we long to be like Him. We want others to see Him reproduced in us. He will help us if we will give ourselves to Him in daily fellowship. We must study His life and words in order to know Him better. We must ask Him to live in us. There will be times when we shall be ready to give ourselves up as hopeless, because we are so far from His perfection. He will never give us up.

*"Po lil' brack sheep dat strayed away,*
*Done los' in de win' and de rain,*
*An de shepherd he say, 'O hirelin',*
*Go fin' my sheep again!'*

*"An de hirelin' say, 'O shepherd,*
*Dat sheep am brack and bad!'*
*But de shepherd he smile like dat lil' brack sheep*
*Wuz de onliest lamb he had.*

*"An de shepherd go out in de darkness,*
*Whar de night wuz col' an' bleak,*
*An dat lil' brack sheep he fin' it,*
*An lay it agains' his cheek.*

*"An de hirelin' frown, 'O shepherd,*
*Don't bring dat sheep to me!'*
*But de shepherd he smile, and he hol' it close—*
*An dat lil' brack sheep was—me!"*

***Learn from Failures.***

Every failure may become a lesson—if we will learn from it. Every failure may help us to be more understanding of others. And always there is the loving forgiveness of the Partner and His strong hand to help us to fresh beginnings.

***The Abundant Life.***

Jesus said: "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." He wants us to live to the full. He wants us to be at our best—physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. He wants every power, every talent, to be given the finest expression. He wants us to realize every possibility of our beings.

***Scale of Values.***

The young man or woman who is seeking self-development should try to find a true scale of values—

to put "first things first." Some of us are not rising to our possibilities because, in our minds, as in the mind of the rich young ruler, *things* are of first importance and wholly absorb our interest. Our lives are so centered on automobiles, clothes, radios, and other things, that we fail fully to appreciate some values that money cannot buy and which are eternal. In our eagerness to get material possessions, we pass by spiritual attainments. We neglect divine fellowship, the development of character, and the joy of service. We forget that "the things that are seen are temporal, the things that are unseen are eternal." We need to hear Christ say: "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth." "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where the moth does not corrupt nor thieves break through and steal." It is right for us to enjoy material things, but it is not right for us to give them first place in our lives and hearts. To do the latter is to be impoverished, undeveloped, and to have little to offer others.

***Development of Taste.***

Beside the distinction to be made between eternal values and passing ones, we have in every field of life to discriminate between the best and the second rate. In everything we find relative values. On every hand there is an opportunity to develop and exercise a taste for the best. Are we reading great books or worthless ones? Do we enjoy fine music as well as "jazz"? Do we appreciate really beautiful pictures? Or is our interest in art confined to the comic strip in the news-

papers? Self-development includes the development of "taste."

### *Development of Service.*

Service, also, is capable of development. Not only must the faithful steward *be* at his best, but he must *do* his best. Whenever an opportunity for service presents itself, the Christian steward must make a decision. Shall he do his best, or shall he be content, as many are, with only half an effort.

### *A Transformed School.*

A young man was graduated from college and returned to his home city to live. He was elected to the superintendency of the church school of which he had long been a member. The office had previously been filled by those who considered it a heavy burden, and who gave to it their half efforts, with the natural result that the school accomplished little. Not content to follow their example, the young man gave to it his best. He considered it his opportunity to make a real contribution to the work of Jesus Christ. He conferred with his pastor, read helpful books on the work of the church school, and attended conferences. As new ideas and methods were introduced a change in the school became apparent. Today, after only a few years of intensive work, that school is carrying on a fine aggressive program of religious education. It was an ordinary school, with ordinary leaders, but one young man who was unwilling to do less than his best for God, was able by his efforts to transform conditions. That re-

sult would never have been possible if he had permitted himself to become discouraged by the conditions under which he was compelled to work.

### *Conditions Not Ideal.*

We often fail to do our best because the circumstances in which we are working, the materials which we are using, are so far from ideal. We think that we could be faithful to choir practice, if we had the inspiration of a fine organ or a great chorus. But under the present conditions we do not feel inspired to do our best. We could teach in the church school, if we only had separate classrooms, but in the present confusion and noise it is impossible. Work with boys and girls would interest us, if we had the necessary equipment with which to carry out modern ideas, but without it we cannot attempt anything. Great opportunities are neglected while we wait for ideal conditions. "Do your best with what you have" is a good slogan.

### *Working for God.*

Sometimes we forget for Whom we are working and because others do not appreciate our abilities and labor, we feel that to do our best would be to waste energy. It is then that we need to remind ourselves that there is One who sees and appreciates; that it is for Him that we are doing our best.

### *Distant Field Attractive.*

The distant field is sometimes the attractive one, and there is the danger of failing to do our best *at home.*

It is easy to postpone putting forth our best efforts until some opportunity for foreign service presents itself. We feel that in China we could do a great work. A young girl who was just completing her school days wondered what her life work was to be. She had been made to feel that she had no especial talents, and so she looked forward with a little apprehension to the future. Then, one day, she found Jesus Christ as Saviour. In all sincerity and earnestness, she prayed: "Lord, if there is anything that I can do for Thee, any service that I can render, any talent that I can use, I am ready." At once she began to dream of a far-off field of labor. Days and weeks passed, yet the door of distant service seemed closed. While she waited she taught a class in the junior department of her church school. Sunday after Sunday she put her very best effort into telling her group of little girls the simple truths of Christ.

***Used at Home.***

Years have gone by and she is still teaching in the junior department. Every year, through her influence, several girls find Christ and unite with His Church. She longed for a distant field of service, but God is using her best in her own local church. She is counting for Him right at home.

***Do Your Best.***

Jesus Christ wants our best whether or not conditions are ideal, whether men praise or ignore us, whether we work abroad or at home. We follow One

who spent His life in sacrificial service. He did His best amid discouraging conditions, under constant adverse criticism, and in the region where He grew up. He needs our best, whatever and wherever we are. As Douglas Mallach says:

*"If you can't be a highway, then just be a trail,*
*If you can't be a sun, be a star,*
*It isn't by size that you win or you fail—*
*Be the best of whatever you are."*

Questions for Further Thought and Discussion

1. What are some of the things you like to do?
2. Why do you like to do them rather than others?
3. Would you say, "A student is preparing to live," or "A student is living"?
4. What are some qualities of character that you would like to develop?
5. Make out your own scale of values at present—not what it should be, but what it is. Write down your interests in order of their importance in your life.
6. What do you consider your present greatest opportunity for service?

# IV

# PLANNING A LIFE

*"Hold fast the pattern of sound teaching you have heard from me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Guard the glorious trust which has been committed to you by the aid of the Holy Spirit who makes his home in us."*—II TIM. 1:13-14 (*Montgomery's Translation*).

*"Take your share in suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. A soldier in active service avoids entangling himself in the every-day affairs of life, so that he may please his commander. And again, an athlete is not crowned unless he obeys the rules of the game. The farmer who has done the work should be the first to get a share of the crop. Reflect on what I am telling you. The Lord will give you understanding in everything."*—II TIM. 2:3-7 (*Montgomery's Translation*).

*"Strive earnestly to present yourself unto God, tested and proved worthy by trial, a workman unashamed, ever cutting a straight furrow for the message of the truth."*—II TIM. 2:15 (*Montgomery's Translation*).

## IV

## PLANNING A LIFE

### *Life Plan Important.*

An editorial in a well-known business magazine suggests: "How foolish you would be to start erecting a building without first preparing a plan! How foolish you would be to start on a journey without knowing where you wanted to go!" Then follows a logical question: "Have you ever sat down and seriously mapped out a plan for your life? Your life is infinitely more important than any building you may construct or any journey you may take. Therefore, why not devote the most earnest effort to planning your life?"

### *Unplanned Life Unbalanced.*

Why not? Yet few of us do. Most of us follow only such plans as are thrust upon us. We go to work or to school at definite times. If meals are served at regular hours we usually manage to be present. But we give no thought to a comprehensive plan for the wise ordering of the whole life. Without a plan a life is likely to be out of balance, ill-proportioned. Unimportant affairs thrust themselves to the front, while matters of real significance find scarcely a place in the daily routine. To make the most of life is not only to

give attention to self-development, but also to a careful life plan. A hit-or-miss process, following lines of least resistance, cannot produce the best results.

### *Budgeting a Day.*

Life is so uncertain as to its events and its duration that we find ourselves obliged to live it a day at a time. Planning a life resolves itself into planning successive days. Life, after all, is only a group of todays. Daily victory means a victorious life. "Budgeting" a day produces a planned life.

### *Rigid Plan Unwise.*

In planning a day one should not make for himself so rigid a program that he becomes an automaton. In a western state there is a young man whose life is planned in such detail that he rises at a regular hour, shaves at just such a time, sits down to breakfast at exactly a quarter of eight, and so throughout the day. In such rigidity there is the danger of making living mechanical. Such a plan may become a positive hindrance instead of a help.

### *Time for Fellowship.*

However, the day should be so planned that it is properly proportioned, and that there is adequate room for important matters that should find their place in it. In the first place, there should be a definite period for fellowship with God. The young person whose life is well planned sets apart an early hour, while his mind is fresh, for communion with his Heavenly Father.

He lets God speak to him through His Word. He talks with God in prayer. He discovers that such fellowship gives him poise of spirit with which to face the problems of the day. He learns that such fellowship is the way to growth into the likeness of Jesus Christ. He finds that such a daily period is a means to spiritual development and to a knowledge of God's will. When he neglects God he discovers that it is he, himself, who suffers from the neglect.

***Requires Will-power.***

Young people are busy folk. There are many interests clamoring for a place in the day. It requires will-power resolutely to set apart a period of time for daily fellowship with God. But the priceless value of such a practice has been demonstrated by its results in many a Christian life.

***Luther's Prayer-life.***

Martin Luther said of his busiest days that he had so much to do that he could not possibly get through without two or three hours of prayer.

***A Business Man.***

A business man in Syracuse, N. Y., rises every day fifteen minutes earlier than business demands in order to enter the presence of God before going out to mingle with men. Those who meet him later in the day recognize in his life a poise, a power, and a Christ-like spirit.

*A Fraternity Group.*

A group of college men, leaders in campus activities, having eight o'clock classes, met in a fraternity house every morning for prayer together before they entered the classroom. They recognized the importance of a planned day, and gave first place in the plan to God.

*Our Lord's Example.*

Our Lord, Himself, spent many hours in prayer, and said, "Men ought always to pray." That is to say, both His example and His teachings endorse the prayer-life. He prayed for strength for daily living, for guidance in important decisions, for endurance in great crises. If He needed to pray, how much more do we need to give prayer a place in our lives!

*Listening-in.*

A day goes better throughout if it is begun with a quiet period of "listening-in" for the voice of God. Sometimes, among the crashing, roaring sounds of life it is difficult to hear it. But it pays to listen-in, to keep the ears of the soul sensitive. You say you are too busy for such a period each day. Then your life is not properly planned, and you, as its architect, need to reshape the plan.

*Time for Service.*

The planned life will also have a place for Christian service. God wants us not only to spend time *with*

Him, but also *for* Him. Many things that God wants done are not being done because everyone says, "I haven't the time." All service requires a faithful stewardship of time and a careful planning of the day. It takes time to prepare a Sunday-school lesson and to teach it. It takes time to go to choir practice and to sing in the choir. It takes time to hold an office in the young people's society, to do "personal work," to teach a class in mission study. It takes time to do the little acts of service that bring happiness.

*Visitation of Aged.*

There are many things that young people can do to bring joy to others if they are willing to give thought and time. One group of young people went in pairs to call upon all the aged men and women in town. The callers were received politely, but with the evident expectancy that they had called to ask for a contribution of some kind—a cake, or a dollar. The pleasure of the old people, when they realized that the young callers had come just to see them, was unbounded. The same group, at Christmas, sang carols under the windows at the homes of all the "shut-ins." At each door they left a box of home-made candy. It was a small service but a worth while one.

*More Christmas Service.*

A group of girls dressed dolls for the Christmas of poor children in hospitals. Another gave a Christmas

party for some little foreign children. Such service necessitates a planned day because it takes time. Youth finds it easy to withhold time from God. Life is so full of interesting things to do! It is easy to let a day slip by, forgetting that part of it definitely belongs to God. It is all too easy to be satisfied with attendance at church on Sunday, without thought of daily fellowship and service.

***Time for Recreation.***

God wants recreation to have a place in our lives. He made us to enjoy humor and play. Every day should have its period of fun and relaxation, a time when body and mind are refreshed. Some persons, because of the nature of their work, especially require out-of-door sports. Others need fun of a different sort. But everyone should avoid letting a day pass without some form of recreation.

***Time for Reading.***

Reading must have its place in the day. There are so many interesting magazines and books that it requires planning to choose a well-rounded reading "diet." Someone has suggested that ten minutes a day is enough to devote to the newspaper. Reading courses that require the spending of fifteen minutes each day with great literature are available. Magazine articles regarding current events and world conditions; articles on art, music and travel; helpful books, that are an aid to character building and spiritual living: all these are worthy of time. Daily

companionship with the leading writers of the past and present is an important part of a well-planned day.

***Leisure Time.***

Every life, in order to count for the most, should be so planned as to make the best possible use of leisure hours. We have a stewardship of spare moments. A consideration of the use one is making of leisure time is helpful in making a budget for the day.

***An Editorial.***

An editorial of recent date asks what has become of all the time saved by modern inventions and changes in industrial conditions? It calls attention to the fact that the twelve-hour factory day has disappeared and that the ten-hour day is rapidly passing. In many trades a forty-four hour week is becoming the standard. That is five and one-half eight-hour days. Then the question is asked: "Shall we have a twenty-four hour week—four six-hour days—in 1950? If so, why not two twelve-hour days, and then five full days of play?" The question may seem ridiculous, and unsympathetic with the real need of changing present conditions of labor, but after all it is suggestive. What *has* become of all the time saved by the reduction of the working day?

***In the Subway.***

One stands in a New York subway station and

watches the crowd madly push on in an effort to catch the next train. One wonders what each man or woman does with the five or ten minutes saved.

***Determined by Interests.***

What we do with leisure is, for the most part, determined by our interests. We write, "I am sorry that I have been so slow in answering your letter, but I simply haven't had the time." It is usually untrue. We have not taken time. Many a young person has brought discouragement to a pastor by saying to him, "You must find someone else to do this work, I just haven't the time." Has a Christian any right to say that he hasn t time for Kingdom business? God gives him twenty-four hours every day as a stewardship. In most cases it is a confession of lack of interest in the work of the church. Most of us, as a matter of fact, find time to do the things that we want most to do.

***The Unguarded Hour.***

A recent moving-picture was entitled "The Unguarded Hour." The phrase is productive of thought. Because of unplanned leisure, many young people have unguarded hours—dangerous hours. A college student said recently that he was able to withstand temptation most of the time because he was busy. But the struggle of each day centered upon a certain period when his work was done and he had nothing in particular to do. It was his unguarded hour. It was his hour of temptation and often of defeat. There is real value

in having a planned day, leaving none of the hours unguarded.

*Planning a Vacation.*

The Christian's life-plan will recognize God's claim upon his vacation days. A pastor tells of two girls who came home from different colleges to spend Christmas vacation in their home town. They were members of the same church. One began at once to plan with her mother the three weeks which she was to spend at home. A skating party, coasting, a dance—there was a plan for every evening. The three weeks rushed by and the girl returned to college. She had been inside her church just once, when she came in one Sunday morning late for the church school. The thought of contributing to the life of the church had not occurred to her. It was her vacation.

*Another Vacation.*

The other girl had only two weeks at home. She, too, enjoyed a good time, and began to plan her vacation accordingly. But she did not forget her Partner. One afternoon she invited to her home a group of girls who were not often asked to parties. Among them was a negro girl. In the afternoon they coasted, and, toward evening, went into the house for refreshments and fun before a roaring fire. It was there that without apology, in a simple natural way, the young hostess spoke of what Christ meant in her life. At the close of her vacation she returned to college. Two weeks later she received a letter from the col-

ored girl who had been her guest, saying that she had given herself to Christ and was finding opportunities to serve Him. A changed life had come as a direct result of a vacation in which Christ was given a place!

*The Use of Money.*

A life-program should embrace not only a plan for the use of time but of money as well. Just as there is a Christian use of time, so there is a Christian use of money. God has an interest in our handling of both.

*Getting Money.*

He cares how we acquire money. The average person gives much thought to how he can make money, but little to the ethics involved in making it. One of the writers sat one day in the office of a broker and heard him tell another man of methods employed in his office that would not stand the test of honesty. He made no apology, and said that the methods he mentioned were in common use among his competitors. A real estate agent told a group of young people that his company could not afford to use honest methods until its competitors were ready to use them too. Both of these men, the broker and the real estate agent, were nominal Christians. But they were not practising Christian stewardship in their methods of acquiring money. As partners of Jesus Christ, we cannot be dishonest in our business methods. We have as real a responsibility regarding our getting of money as concerning our giving and spending of it.

### *Another Illustration.*

Another illustration of failure to practise Christian stewardship is afforded by a stock company, comprising many nominally Christian men. Stock was sold to a large number of people. Then the company manipulated conditions so that the price of stock dropped to a low mark. When the low mark was reached the larger holders were able to buy up practically all the stock at their own price and the small holders were in most cases forced out. Practically every man involved was a Christian in name. But the ethics employed were far from Christian.

### *Give Value Received.*

In getting money, the Christian must also bear in mind his responsibility to give the full equivalent in labor for every dollar paid him. By neglecting his work, by being lazy, a man may rob his employer and be untrue to God. For example, a man who was in charge of a large piece of construction, in the midst of the building operation became out of sorts, and, in a spirit of retaliation, gave the word to his men to slow up in their work. As a result the job cost several hundred dollars more than it should have. Yet that man is fairly regular in his attendance at church and calls himself a Christian. One's religion should not be separated from his daily work. The student who cheats in examination or in the preparation of his college work, the laborer who fails to give full value for his money, is responsible before God for his failure to let his religion function in his life.

### *The Lord's Money.*

God also has a concern in our giving. Just as He wants a share of our time, so He wants a share of our money. It must be the first portion—He does not want our "leavings." We are not to spend all that we wish to and then give Him what is left. He wants us, in accordance with a life-plan, to set apart His portion first of all. As someone has said: "The evangelization of the world is too important a matter to be left until everything else has been provided for."

### *A Christian Budget.*

A budget is a fine thing to have. Some magazines and some banks are ready to help in the building of one. But such a suggested budget is not always a Christian budget with God's share as its first item.

### *God's Share.*

What is God's share? How much should the Christian plan to set apart for God's work in the world, at home and abroad? Individual circumstances vary, so that no general rigid law may be laid down. But it is safe to say that in the great majority of cases at least a tenth of every dollar, or of every dime, of every Christian, however young, belongs to God. Long before the coming of the Saviour, the Jews were doing as well as that. Surely love and gratitude should now prompt us to give at least as much as they.

### *Increase in Giving.*

As we grow older, and earn more, our giving to

God should increase—we should "put away childish things." Some of us began our giving on a penny basis and have never outgrown the habit!

### *A Cheerful Giver.*

The Lord still loves a cheerful giver. The enthusiastic pledge followed by a grudging payment is all too familiar! Even worse is the unnecesary breaking of a solemn pledge made to God and His Church.

### *Money-raising Methods.*

If the rising generation would adopt the stewardship method for financing Kingdom enterprises, the Church of Christ could free herself from the money-raising methods—fairs, suppers, movies, and rummage sales—that are now such a hindrance to her. If its members will practice stewardship, the young people's department of any church can conduct its work without such indirect methods. Energies may thus be released for direct service. Time and strength need not be spent in "raising" money.

### *Saving Money.*

The wisely planned life makes provision for the future and for unexpected emergencies by the saving of money. There is a stewardship slogan: "Give a tenth, save a tenth." It is wise advice. Every young person should find safe investment for a portion of his earnings where it may produce interest while he is not using it. Only the foolish and the improvident fail to prepare for the inevitable "rainy day." When one is

young and strong, one can easily make financially secure the days to come when youth and strength will be gone.

### *Spending Money.*

Not only is the "Lord's money" our stewardship, but the Christian has a responsibility in the spending of all money. Undue extravagance and luxury are unbecoming in the Christian who lives in a world where many are in need. We cannot be true followers of Christ and lavish all of our money upon ourselves. There must be proportion in our spending.

### *Responsibility of Spending.*

Another thing for the Christian to remember is that what he buys he produces. That is to say, as long as there is a demand for a thing it will be produced. For illustration, in buying tickets a young Christian sometimes thoughtlessly aids in the production of an entertainment that would not bear the inspection of his Partner. Spending money is a real responsibility.

### *Unwise Spending.*

There are many illustrations of unwise spending of money. A man was so behind in the payment of his coal bill that the dealers had refused him a further supply until he was able to pay in full. In the meantime, a friend called to see him. In spite of his unpaid bills, the man showed his caller a small fishing-rod for which he had just paid sixteen dollars. Fishing is a wholesome sport and not an extravagant one, but if a man

is unable to buy coal to keep his family warm, he has little to justify him in spending sixteen dollars for a fishing-rod.

***Another Illustration.***

A minister had the habit of purchasing new furniture in every town to which he moved. He bought on the installment plan with the most sincere expectation of paying in full. However, his pastorates were short, and he usually moved to the next field before he finished paying for his purchase. Behind him was a trail of unpaid bills. He had the best of intentions, but his influence as a minister and a Christian was greatly lessened because of his unwise spending of money.

***Trusts.***

A Christian's day and a Christian's dollar are trusts from God. A careful plan for investing them is an aid to faithful stewardship.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Make a critical record for a week, day by day, of the way you spend your time. At the end of the week examine your record very critically, as in His presence, to determine wherein the way the time was spent was wise or faulty.
2. Having done the above, make out in advance a time-table of activities for a week, putting into it those things which have been neglected.
3. Having done this for a week, note the ways in which you have lived more efficiently and more happily.

# V

# FINDING THE WILL OF GOD

*"Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to his disciples,*

*"'Sit down here, while I go and pray yonder.'*

*"And he took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him, and began to be in anguish and sore distress, and he said to them:*

*"'My soul is in anguish, even unto death! Stay here, and keep watch with me.'*

*"Then he went forward a short distance, and fell on his face and prayed:*

*"'O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.'*

*"Then he came to his disciples, and found them asleep, and said to Peter:*

*"'So you were none of you strong enough to watch with me even an hour! Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.'*

*"Then he went away again a second time and prayed, saying, 'O, my Father, if this cup cannot pass except I drink it, Thy will be done.'"*—MATTHEW 26:36-42 (*Montgomery's Translation*).

# V

## FINDING THE WILL OF GOD

***God's Purpose.***

The chief concern of a Christian steward should be to find and to carry out God's purpose for his life. God has a purpose for every life. Any one who believes in the existence of God and that He is the Creator of the universe, must believe that He has a purpose in that creation. Although man may seem to be a small part of it, he is the crowning part of all the creative work of God. If there be a purpose behind the universe, certainly there is a purpose behind every life which is a part of it.

***Two Viewpoints.***

The young Christian, then, should try so to live as to fulfil God's purpose. He should see life from two points of view: from that of the Giver of life, and from that of the one who must carry out the divine purpose—himself.

***Helping God.***

It is at once apparent that these two points of view must be brought into harmony; not by inducing God to see the life from the steward's point of view, but

by the steward's willingness to see it from God's point of view. He must fit his life into God's great plan for the universe; he must fulfil God's purpose for him as an individual. He must realize that if his life is a failure, in so much God's purpose for the universe fails. Behind each life is the master mind of God with its purpose of salvaging the human family. Each life has a duty, a function, in helping God in the supreme task.

### *Christian, a Foreman.*

Each Christian steward may be thought of as a foreman in the great business enterprise of the kingdom; responsible to God, the Owner, for conducting the affairs of his own life. God has placed him in charge. God has made him accountable for that part of His plan. He may work out in his life the purpose of God or he may make wreck and ruin of it. He may effect the greatest possible efficiency in his plant, eliminating waste and weakness, or he may have little concern for the profits of the Owner.

### *God's Will Best.*

The dominant purpose of a Christian life should be to know God's will and to do it. If he be wise, the young steward knows that therein lies his greatest ultimate happiness and usefulness. He wants, from a merely selfish point of view, to live in the will of God, knowing that a loving Father wills only the best for His child.

*Sometimes Hard.*

Sometimes God's will seems hard. Even our Lord found it so. In the black hours of Gethsemane His anguished soul cried out that if it were possible the cup might pass from Him. But He added: "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." There was a life of which the dominant purpose was to live in the will of God. God's will took Him to Gethsemane, it took Him to the cross, but it found in Him the One who made possible the carrying out of God's great purpose, the redemption of the world.

*A Pattern.*

In weaving a rug in India only the master weaver knows what the design is to be. But, according to his directions, each weaver patiently throws his shuttle, knowing that if he gives implicit obedience, his bit of weaving will be part of a harmonious and beautiful whole. Sometimes we cannot understand God's will, but we know that He has a pattern, and that, some day, we, too, shall see the design in all of its beauty. Then what appear to us now to be meaningless bits, will be revealed as parts of a great plan.

*Discovering God's Will.*

How may one know God's will? In various ways. He has many ways of speaking to us. We find His will for us in His Word. By studying it we know in general what He wants us to be and to do. But it is the particular, rather than the general, that puzzles us most. We want to know His will in given situations.

We want His guidance in making important decisions. The major decisions of life are usually made in youth. We want to know God's will regarding them. How are we to know?

*Ways of Discovery.*

Several things may guide us in discovering it. God may speak to us through the lips of friends who are living close to Him. We should listen for His voice in their advice. Or, we may hear a " still, small voice " speaking in our own hearts. Our own deepening convictions concerning what is right for us to do are often God's way of making His will known. Sometimes He uses circumstances. Our lives take such shape that only one course of action is left to us. As in the case of the Israelites, facing the Red Sea, there is only one way. If we have earnestly sought His will, we may be sure that it is His way.

*Stewardship One Way.*

The practice of stewardship is a means toward the discovery of His will. " In all thy ways acknowledge Him "—that is stewardship—" and He shall direct thy paths." If we are faithful stewards, doing His will wherever we know what it is, we can surely trust Him to lead us in the way He wants us to take.

*Choice of Vocation.*

Let us consider one of the major decisions that young people have to make—the choice of a vocation. Most young people begin early to ask themselves:

"Where shall I place my life?" It is one of the most important questions that young people have to answer. The young Christian, if he is a faithful steward, will follow it by other questions, and will seek to find the answers to them. He will ask: "What is God's will for my vocation? Where can I make the greatest contribution to the carrying out of His great purpose? Where will my life count most for Him?"

*Some Considerations.*

He will pray much and earnestly about it. He will talk with Christian friends of good judgment and wise experience. He will listen carefully for God's voice in his inmost convictions. He will watch for His guiding hand in the shaping of the circumstances of his life. He will take into account the assets which God has given him. For what vocation do they best fit him? He will consider the needs of the world. Where are his particular resources most needed? And, sooner or later, he will know where God wants him, what He wants him to be.

*Many Fields Open.*

Many fields of service are open to young men and women. There are tremendous opportunities for promoting the King's business in those callings to which we usually refer as "Christian work." God opens the eyes of one young man so that, like Jesus, he sees the multitude and is "moved with compassion" because they are "as sheep having no shepherd." And so God calls him to the glorious opportunity of the Christian

ministry. It is a calling which ought to challenge the best of our youth because it is a calling which is after God's own heart and which requires the finest manhood.

***Foreign Fields.***

God turns the gaze of another young man across the seas to the darker half of the world; the half that has no teacher, no doctor, no Christ. He has the Light of the World. He feels that he must take it to those dark lands. And so he goes forth as a Christian teacher, a Christian doctor, a Christian evangelist —a foreign missionary.

***Home Fields.***

Another finds his place among foreign-speaking peoples in America. Another, among the Indians. Another, among the negroes. Another becomes a colporteur and carries the Gospel and other books to the neglected and isolated folk of the south and west.

***Young Women.***

God calls young women, too, to both " foreign " and " home " service. " The field is the world." One is a doctor in a hospital in India, reaching for Christ through the ministry of healing the little mothers of that distant land. Another teaches in a girls' school in Japan. She daily presents Christ to her pupils and has in her hands the moulding of Christian character, the development of Christian idealism. Another is the head of a " Christian center " in the foreign quarter

of a great city. She has a multitude of ways at her disposal of bringing Christ into lives that would know nothing of Him were it not for her. God gives another the work of a pastor's assistant. Still another becomes a field worker, speaking in churches and colleges. These are only a few of the opportunities of "Christian work." A thousand doors are open for presenting Jesus Christ, through words and life, to a needy world.

### *All Life Sacred.*

But we do wrong to make too sharp a division between the "sacred" and the "secular." To the Christian, all of life is sacred, and is to be used to promote the purposes of God. Would we dare to say that God might not call a Christian young man into business to make money to promote His great enterprise? To be entrusted with making money to finance Christ's work is a sacred stewardship. Of course the principles of Christ must be practised in the business; it must be wholly Christian. There must be no fraudulent methods. There must be no exploitation of labor. Fortunately there are some examples of such businesses; and they are not only thoroughly Christian, but their profits are poured forth in the service of Jesus Christ.

### *"Secular" Callings Opportunities.*

Would we dare to say that a young woman who became a homemaker, a wife, and a mother, who gave herself to shaping little lives toward Christian man-

hood and womanhood, was not engaged in Christian service? Are not the work of the Christian teacher and the Christian physician great opportunities for presenting Christ?

*Not Professional.*

Any occupation to which God calls a young person, the place where He wants him and can use him, is a sacred calling and a stewardship. "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Sometimes "secular" service counts even more for Him, because it is not regarded as "professional."

*Conclusion.*

To sum up the message of this book—the young Christian is Christ's partner. He has many resources that Christ can use. It is his responsibility to develop them. He must have a life plan. He must fit his life into God's great purpose. All these are his duties as a Christian steward.

But they are more than duties. They are privileges. They lead to the fullest, richest living. The life of service is the abundant life, the joyous life.

Are we ready to live it, to give all that we are and have to the furtherance of Christ's great enterprise, the redemption of a world?

A thrilling incident took place in the Italian Chamber of Deputies on the morning after the murder of Matteoti. The clerk, calling the roll, came to the name of Matteoti. A great silence filled the room because everyone knew that Matteoti could not respond to his

name; he was dead; he had been murdered the day before. But, suddenly, a voice from the gallery vigorously responded, "Here!" Everyone was startled. No one could understand it. But after a few moments everyone understood, for the same response came, again and again, from all over the house, from the floor and from the galleries, "Here!" "Here!" "Here!" It was the followers of Matteoti. They were signifying that although their leader was dead, *they* were *there*—there to carry on the principles for which Matteoti stood; there to bring to a successful issue that which Matteoti began.

*Our* leader has gone on before. He is not dead. He "ever liveth." He has left us to carry forward that which brought Him into the world, that for which He died. He has left His work in our hands. Are we ready, with all sincerity and zeal, with all that we are, and all that we have, to say, "Here!"?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

1. Ask yourself: "Is it my deepest desire really to find God's will for me and to do it?"
2. For what vocation are you best suited by natural abilities? Do you think it is a vocation through which you render the greatest service to God?
3. Is there a great need for that particular service?
4. Analyze the motives which are helping you to reach a decision as to your vocation in life.
5. Are the motives unselfish and wholesome enough to be considered by a follower of Christ?

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